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issue 3
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THE SEEQ TEAM

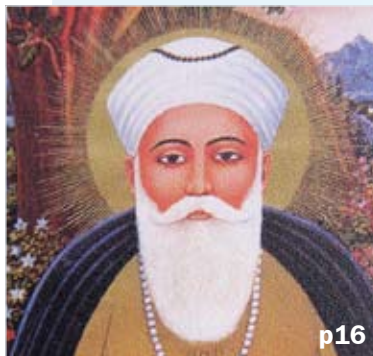
Another year, another week of all nighters and another issue of SEEQ, it's just what the doctor ordered.

Firstly a big welcome to all our regular readers and all those who are privileged newcomers to SEEQ, Britain's favorite Sikh magazine.

With the credit crunch still biting away at our pockets and taxes back on the rise, we've somehow managed to scrounge together our coppers and produce another magazine. Not only have we managed to produce our 3rd edition in what is seen as the worst economic crisis in decades, we've also managed to raise thousands of pounds for charity. SEEQ's annual national Football Tournament was held on 31st October 2009, where we managed to raise a substantial amount for both Khalsa Aid, (see page 7) and Promise Dreams. It's been a busy year to say the least.

SEEQ are again indebted to our sponsors and advertisers, without whom there wouldn't be a magazine. We are still all volunteers in this project, the only way for SEEQ to survive is through your help. So please support us in any way possible so that we may bring SEEQ out on a regular basis, with even more knowledgeable, informative and humorous articles.

This year's issue takes us BACK TO BE-SEEQ's (excuse the pun) of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's message.



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Nevertheless it still has the legendary Auntie Baksho, who's here with her usual helping hand along with new features the Real Hustle, Flying Sikh and Call of Duty, this could be the best SEEQ yet. We hope you enjoy the read as much as us, and take something away from it at the same time too.

Being volunteers from different walks of life, who regularly give up their time and money to promote community and religious spirit, the SEEQ team, would like to take this opportunity to apologies in advance for any mistakes that may have been made in the latest edition. SEEQ always welcomes all types of feedback, so if there's anything you would like to share, just drop us an email.

Finally a big thank you to all you guys out there for making SEEQ what it is today.

WE NEED YOU!

SEEQ could not be as successful without your support. We are always on the lookout for new writers, editors, sponsors and foot soldiers to distribute the magazine. So, if you are interested in helping out in any way possible, get in touch: info@see-q.net

DID YOU KNOW?

Issues 1 & 2 are available online at: www.see-q.net/download.html

Magazine design by www.fiverivers.net



8th January

Mum's friend aunty Gurmito came to our house and told mum that aunty Gejjo's daughter from the local Gurdwara is getting married. I see mum sitting around anxious all night.

13th January

My mum has been harassing me once again about getting married. I've only been looking for 8 years, and I've tried to explain to her in western terms that's nothing. But she's told me, she's had enough of me waiting for my Brad Pitt and she's taking me to India to get blessed, by whom I don't know. We're flying out next week.

19th January

The stress of marriage is now getting to me. Maybe it's me, that's why I can't get married. Mum told me Aunty Gejjo's daughter was blessed by a Baba in Nurmahal, and that changed her fortune to get married. We're flying out tomorrow, and I'm really not looking forward to my 2 week trip to Punjab, even though I haven't been for 10 years.

20th January

Our suitcases are overweight. Don't ask me how or why, but my mum's packed these bags. I've told her we're only going for a few days, but she doesn't listen. Punjab here we come...

21st January

What a day! I'm tired, cold and the food is dreadful. Living with mosquitoes, lizards and hearing the cows mooing all night long was not what I had in mind. But the peace, tranquillity and sense of belonging I gained from going to the Golden Temple (Sri Harmandir Sahib) is one that I've never experienced before. I've seen pictures and heard stories, but never before had I felt at home like that.

22nd January

It was an early start. Mum said we haven't got long if we want to make the most of this holiday. Well, not much of a holiday, it sounds like it's going to be more of a business trip, with the business being me!!! We went to some man in Nurmahal; I think he is also called the Leettaa Vala Baba (Baba with lights!). Anyway he blessed me apparently, after a big donation. I was surprised by the amount of men with guns and personal bodyguards. The thought did cross my mind: Is this really a holy man?

23rd January

Suit shopping was great in Phagwara. Only got 18 suits today, so hopefully should be off to Jalandhar in the next few days.

24th January

Today we went to Beas. There was a Baba here too. I don't remember his name, but that place was huge. It's so weird that all these religious places have so much security. After going through what felt like customs, I was allowed through to see the Baba who whispered something in my ear, some magic word or something. He told me I can't tell anyone, as it's only for me. But I've already forgotten what it is. Oh well, I suppose it couldn't have that much magic behind it.

25th January

Apparently I'm too sweet as I have mosquito bites all over. The creams, sprays, and light switch things are not working. Diarrhoea has kicked in like everyone said it would, so I've not eaten or drank anything apart from the desi remedies. I spent all day at home, and I'm going to the pind doctor tomorrow.

26th January

The doctor wanted to give me an injection. I said no, so he gave me a prescription of 8 tablets, which seemed weird. But I do feel a bit better. My mum took me to some little place in the fields, or a Jagga as they were calling it. My mum said my ancestors have been going there for years and I was made to bow to it too, even though it did seem pointless.

27th January

I went from house to house to house. I met people I never even knew existed, but apparently they are all related to me. I had people give me money, old suits and I haven't drank so much sweet tea in my life. This could be the day I get diabetes.

28th January

Today was interesting to say the least. I had the opportunity to meet some more holy men. This time I had a man read my hand and tell me that I should be getting married in the near future (all for a small fee of course). Apparently I'm also blessed to have 3 children (which made my mum smile - including a boy). All I have to do is say a prayer that this man gave me for 40 days, and everything should be sorted. If only all our problems could be resolved so easily. I wonder why the UN haven't used him to solve the world's conflicts?

29th January

Saying the prayer that Baba Ji gave me all seems surreal. I'm considering going back to ask him to give me one to get a new job, and maybe even for next week's lottery numbers, but nevertheless I'm still going to do the it. Well, my mum's going to force me to do it. I went shopping again today, bought another 4 suits. The tailors are taking way too long to sew my other ones and my mum is getting stressed out.

30th January

I had an argument today with my mum. She wanted me to go see some other Baba. I said no! I've been to too many already. I told her "If I haven't been blessed by now, I never will". All the stresses of marriage are coming back, so instead I went to the pind Gurdwara. The Giani introduced me to the Chaupai Sahib. He said it's a small prayer which will protect me through all times. I said I'll research it. But surprisingly, he never asked me for any money which was a bonus, it's always good to save during the credit crunch. I think chilling at home in the pind was desperately needed.

31st January

1 day to go and now we need to pack. Somehow our suitcases are still over weight. My mum says we've got one more Baba to see on the way back to Amritsar. Apparently he's got a huge following. But I'm more concerned about how much it's going to cost me, the UK pounds dropped against the rupee again!

1st February

This Baba was called Baba Santa. Baba Santa Claus I think was his full name, apparently he gives to people all over the world for nothing but a glass of milk, he asked me if I've been a good honest person. I wasn't going to say no in front of my mum was I? But he said he will see me at Christmas as he'll be coming to the UK - he obviously doesn't care about his carbon footprint. Again, another costly adventure, I don't know what all the hype was about. On the way back we go to The Golden Temple. Again, the tranquillity is amazing. Looking forward to going home and sleeping in my own bed and not getting stung by mosquitos.

2nd February

I spent the day relaxing and researching the words, Shabads and blessing that the Babai gave me. I've found they all come from The Guru Granth Sahib Ji apart from one from Dasam Granth Sahib Ji (Guru Gobind Singh's writing). My search for Brad Pitt continues, I really hope this works, for mum's sake more than mine.

3rd February

I read the translation of Chaupai Sahib today. The last line really hit home. Is what I have been doing the last few days really going to help me get married, or even enhance my spiritual experiences? Time to reflect I think.

**Sagal duaar kau chhaad(i) kai gahyo tuhaaro duaar.
Ba(n)hi gahay kee laaj as gobind daas tuhaar. (ANG 864)**

O Lord ! I have forsaken all other doors and have caught hold of only Thy door. O Lord ! Thou has caught hold of my arm; I, Govind, am Thy self, kindly take (care of me and) protect my honour.

shaadi

It made my mum happy, but all I got told by these babai and everyone else was "it's my sanjoog" (written destiny) as to when I will get married, so why did I need to go to see these babai in the first place? What I realised is that even though I went to all these Babai they all SOLD me different things from Guru Granth Sahib Ji, apart from the giani, who gave me the words of Guru Gobind Singh Ji for free.

Everything I need is in Guru Granth Sahib Ji, it was pointless of me going from Baba to Baba when I could have got everything they offered me directly from my Guru.



Down in Front!

the real hustle

by I I Singh



Pint?



Over the years a surge of holy men, gurus and spiritual leaders have impregnated Punjab, and large parts of the world. But who do I believe and where should I actually go? Who is telling me the truth and who is in it to make a quick buck? Do these Gurus actually offer anything different and do they all come from the real Guru's school of teaching? One thing I've realised is that this is nothing new. It's actually a blast from the past. In Guru Tegh Bhadur Ji's time there were 22 fake gurus, all asking for gold coins. It was only until the Guru revealed himself to Makhan Shah Lubhana did the world come to know of our ninth Guru.

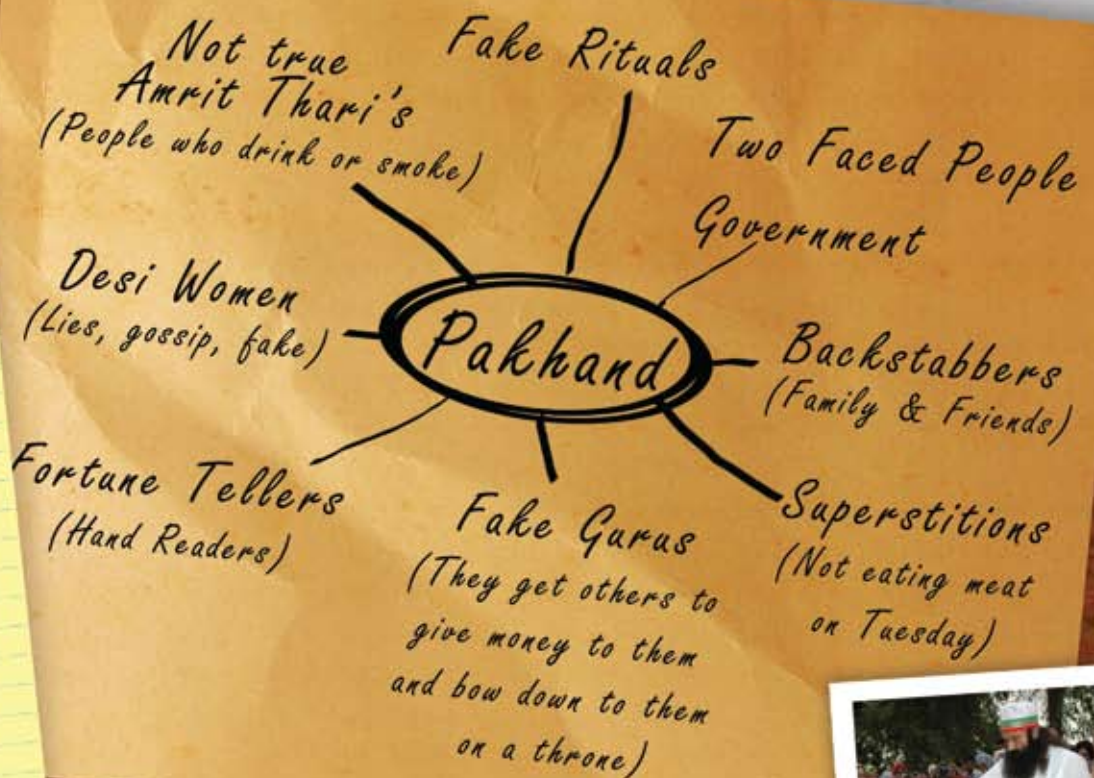
Like Makhan Shah it is actually our desperation and desire that leads us to our Guru. Our needs of marriage, family problems, and financial difficulties to name a few apply a burden of pressure on our shoulders, sometimes burdens that are too heavy for us to resolve ourselves. **We are led to believe that only with the intervention of a supreme being can it be resolved.** This is what leads to an explosion of fake gurus, who supposedly have all the answers and cures.

Punjab has been flooded with so-called religious men, who apparently hold not only all the cures but also all the votes in their local areas. Aushotosh from Nurmahel, Radha Swamis, Nirankaris, Darshan Dashis to name a few. But what is the common denominator? It is the exploitation of the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib Ji for their own personal gain, just to draw in naive followers.

The holy scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib Ji seem to be the marketing tool of choice used by most self proclaimed gurus, either by giving somebody a line to repeat or maybe just repeating the core message. So why are a lot of people turning to these gurus if their core message is just duplicated from Guru Granth Sahib Ji? Are these fakes therefore really needed? I've realised that the message of Guru Granth Sahib Ji can be difficult to understand, without putting in time and effort to understand what's being read. Somebody explaining to us the divine messages within Guru Granth Sahib Ji is attractive and captivating, as I've been drawn in on many occasions. So when somebody explains a line or verse, it is so appealing that we are sucked in. These fake gurus of today are passing on the message of Guru Granth Sahib Ji as their own, hence the overflow of people turning to the little dera (their building or communal area). Once duped, the overall messages of these gurus then change, all to suit their own personal needs.

The messages in Guru Granth Sahib Ji are universal, simple and straight to the point. The Guru Granth Sahib promotes a moral teaching that we endeavour to live a life of truth, respect for others, and high moral standards. It gives us answers to our problems and day to day scenarios, all we need to do is research the answers ourselves rather than fall under the trap of a common day fake Guru. Have we tried opening ourselves up to Guru Granth Sahib Ji rather than an inferior cheap imitation? In other words, why use a middle man when we can go direct to the source?

Guru Granth Sahib Ji is the divine message, the truth and there to guide our lives. If only we let Guru Granth Sahib in.....believe and achieve.





Saturday 31st October 2009

The smell in the air is distinctive. It is 2.05pm to be precise and as I walk around Aldersly Leisure Centre, sweat and sinew fills the air. My thoughts go out to Kamaljeet Kaur, a female reporter from the Sikh Channel who has been filming all day. Does she appreciate the high standard of football on display?... sexist you



might say... what do you expect from a straight talking Yorkshireman?

It was the first time that I had the opportunity to watch the teams in action.

Again the response has been awe-inspiring. Over seventy of the very best teams from all over the country were in attendance...and it was evident what it meant to them all.

Even the junior section was a highly contested affair with no quarter given. The spirit of the Gurus having been infused in them all, following a poignant talk on issues affecting Sikhs all over the world and the Ardaas.

Before the talk, the teams, managers and supporters all tucked into scrumptious samosas, washed down with traditional desi chaa...none of that watery rubbish here! The sevadars at Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Sedgley Street, getting up even earlier than their early

dawn breaking Saturday morning start, to fry well over a thousand samosas. It didn't stop there, they spent the rest of the morning till midday preparing langar for well over 700 hundred people. Meanwhile Uppal Sweet Centre was busy preparing

a donation of hundreds of samosas which were very kindly received. A note for next year...don't forget the chutney, particularly as we always forget the tomato ketchup!

Samosas had followed the registration of teams, obligatory mugshot and an

goal!

explanation of the tournament rules by the FA approved referees. Khalsa Aid was present to share the invaluable work they do around the world in the spirit of Bhai Kanhaiya Ji. Also in attendance at this charity event were Promise Dreams, raising money for terminally ill children. The SEEQ team were clearly visible in their unique pink signature logo. Hosting such a huge event takes Swiss-like precision planning and timing. Thankfully we have a mass of family and friends who know us better and were there to support the event in a multitude of ways.

When serving langar I got chatting to one of the young pretenders to the SEEQ Five-a-side Football Tournament crown – the senior ABD having won the crown again last year. Apparently every week both teams would play each other with the youngsters coming out on top every time. He was worried that sod's law would dictate that they would lose the final. He needn't have worried as they cruised to victory. Smethwick Sikh Temple running out as the under 12's winners and Punjab United coming out on top in the under 16's section.

The presentation gave us the opportunity to thank our sponsors without whom the event could not take place.

Notwithstanding this, the commitment of all

the teams, sevadars and supporters cannot be understated. Trophies fit to grace the most elegant of fireplace mantels were awarded to the Winners, Runners-up, Most valuable player and for Fair play. Money raised from the event, a hefty £1000, was donated to Khalsa Aid.

Look out for the next tournament later this year...you've got to be in it to win it! By Guru Ji's grace you will.

By Mangal Singh



Q & A with Khalsa Aid founder – Ravinder Singh

Who and what is Khalsa Aid ?

Khalsa Aid (KA) is a humanitarian relief agency that was launched in 1999 to provide cross border humanitarian relief and also to raise awareness and the global profile of Sikhs worldwide.

Describe the inspiration behind the formation of the organisation

At the time of the celebrations to mark the 300th birth of the Khalsa across the world there was a bloody war raging in Kosovo and every news bulletin carried the terrible pictures of the suffering of refugees, so I thought to myself that there was so much food at the Khalsa celebrations yet only 1700 miles away there were people fighting for a loaf of bread! At that moment Khalsa Aid was born imbued with the spirit of Bhai Khaniya Ji.

Do you have any particularly memorable/ inspirational stories you would like to share

During our Congo relief mission our team were almost shot and robbed but a Muslim gentleman by the name of Alif Wasangi saved the team. The next morning there was a stranger waiting for the team with the passports that were forcefully taken the night before. He had Sikh friends in South Africa who passed away leaving their three young children in his care. He had raised all three children in the Sikh way of life. He was the miracle that Waheguru sent to make the teams program so much easier in a very hostile environment.

How do you fund the programmes you undertake?

We are wholly funded by the global Sikh community, either by one off donations or monthly standing orders.

What is the most harrowing situation have you been in (Khalsa Aid)?

The Pakistan Earthquake (2005) and the Orissa cyclone were particularly distressing as in some places we were involved in retrieving dead decomposing bodies that had been decomposing for some time. The situation in Orissa was terrible as there were families tied to each other lying face down dead in the fields.

Tell us about Punjab Underprivileged Rural Empowerment (P.U.R.E)?

Khalsa Aid has decided to launch PURE, as it is part of our Focus Punjab project (www.focuspunjab.org). It began to tackle the many issues which are affecting and undermining the Sikh way of life such as drugs abuse, alcohol abuse, the lack of educational institutions and the rise of anti Sikh elements that have launched misleading social programmes to entice the poor rural Sikh community away from Sikhi.

What can we as the Sikh Sangat do to help?

We thank and appreciate all the sangat that have supported Khalsa Aid. We can only hope more Sikhs and Sikh Gurdwaras support us with monthly donations. We also need volunteers who can share our vision and help develop Khalsa Aid.

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For those of you that aren't potentially suffering from early signs of memory loss let me introduce a gentleman to you called Mohinder Singh Pujji. Actually let me give you his full title - Squadron Leader Mohinder Singh Pujji, fighter pilot for the RAF during WW2. During the war he proudly wore his turban and always flew with an additional turban in his plane. Now 91 he explains "I used to carry a spare turban with me so I would have one if I got shot down". Mohinder was one of only a handful of highly recognised Indian fighter pilots that made up the RAF.

At 22 he was shot down during a mid air dog fight with German forces over the English Channel and crash landed his Hurricane fighter plane near the White Cliffs of Dover. In the crash his specially designed turban in which he sustained severe head wounds, saved his life.

Referring to the incident Mohinder said "The padding of my turban saved me, it was full of blood. I was taken to the hospital but after seven days I was back flying again". Mohinder's bravery and valour were eventually recognised and he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

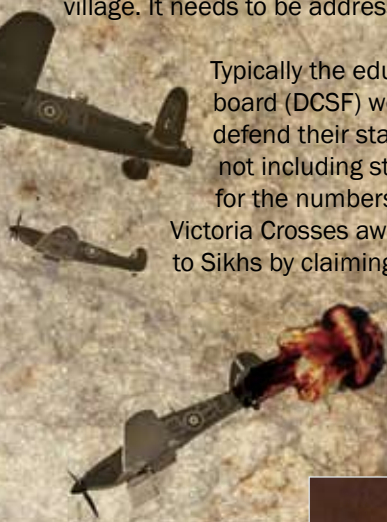
Considering the number of Sikh soldiers involved in both the 1st and 2nd World Wars it is a shame we are only occasionally reminded of our contribution from the odd article in the newspaper.

Ideally contributions made by the Sikhs, and other ethnic minorities during the wars should be taught as part of the National Curriculum and for their efforts and participation to be recognised. It is cryptically taught that during the World Wars when referring to the contribution of the colonial forces to the British Empire, it often includes Sikhs from India and other ethnic minorities, however the actual numbers involved were thousands not a couple of guys from some remote village. It needs to be addressed.

Typically the education board (DCSF) would defend their stance of not including statistics for the numbers of Victoria Crosses awarded to Sikhs by claiming they

do not want to favour one ethnic group over another. However unless we as the seeds of these fearless warriors raise the issues, complain and register our forefathers involvement, it will never be included in the curriculum. Now that you are aware it is incumbent on all of us to write a letter requesting that the contribution of the Sikhs and other ethnic minorities are taught properly. Who could we write to? The DCSF and our MP for starters. For those of you who don't - are you sure you want such a memory to fade so easily?

Now where is that envelope...



TOP★GUN

By K Singh

Have you ever left the house and thought to you self "hmmm, I know I've forgotten something but cant think what it is"?
Have you ever sat on a plane and had the entire journey plagued by your potential forgetfulness?
Have you forgotten how this story started and may be your own name?

You my friend - may need to see a doctor.

Sardar Hari Singh, famously known for being the only man to conquer Afghanistan to this present day, was born in 1791 AD in Gujranwala (now in Pakistan). His mother Mata Dharam Kaur with the help of her brother raised the young prodigy. She did a fantastic job preparing him for his destiny by educating him in warfare, strategy, horse riding, and Punjabi, Urdu and Persian languages. While at a young age he was baptised into the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

It was in 1805 at the age of only 14 years that the young Hari Singh caught the attention of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh. In an open field event, which the Maharaja used to organize every year, Hari Singh showed his excellence in the events of horse riding, sword fighting, spear throwing and warfare which completely astounded and pleased the Maharaja who immediately invited Hari Singh to join his army commanding 700 footmen and horses and bestowed upon him the honour of Sardar.



It was following a hunting expedition during the early days of his service under Maharaja Ranjeet Singh, that the young Sardar was given the accolade of Nalwa. Whilst the Maharajas hunting party had their sights on stalking their prey, a tiger in the jungle had different ideas and launched a stealthy attack on Hari Singh; who didn't have time to draw his sword but managed to catch the tiger by its jaws.

After a ferocious struggle the young

Sardar Ji managed to wrestle the man-eater away giving him just enough time to unsheathe his Kirpan and swiftly put the beast to death in one fowl swoop.

It was this act of bravery, that would have had men of twice his size and stature run with fear or lose their courage and be devoured, that impressed the Maharaja so much that he bestowed him with the title of Nalwa, after an old King called King Nall that legend has it, hunted tigers with his bare hands thus calling him Nalwa ("Nall-Wa", "like Nall"). The very next day the Maharaja appointed Hari Singh as a captain of a regiment called the "Sher-dil Regiment".

One of the most significant operations led by Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was that against the Governor of Kashmir to free Shah Shuja from prison after the Shahs wife, Wafa Begum, had asked for Maharajah Ranjeet Singh for his assistance. After diplomacy had failed, Hari Singh Nalwa was sent in to free Shah Shuja which he accomplished successfully, and as a result Shah Shuja gave the famous Kohinoor diamond to the Maharajah.



The Maharajah was so grateful he made Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa Governor of Kashmir. Immediately after his appointment; Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa ordered a ban on Jaziya, a tax the Muslim rulers applied on all non-Muslims. But no matter what, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and his forces never destroyed any mosques or abducted Muslim women.

During the latter part of his life, Hari Singh became the only man to this very day to conquer Afghanistan. This is no mean feat, considering George. W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev failed miserably in their attempt to conquer, what was once the land of the Sikhs. It is commonly heard that Hari Singh's name was often used by Afghan mothers to put their children asleep, as his name brought just as much fear as it did admiration.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa was a fierce soldier, yet a fair administrator and set upon his duties as a true Sikh and treated all, regardless of caste, religion or sex as equals.



Last King of Afghanistan

By B Singh

Some say he once killed a tiger with his bare hands, some say that Afghan women use his name to scare their kids to sleep, all we know is that he's called Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.....!

From personal experience I know its daunting trying to live in the spiritual way that our Gurus highlighted for us. In particular spending time doing Simran (meditation) or any of the paath (prayers) that as Sikhs we need to do.

Cleansing the

We often look at tasks with defeat already in our eyes and heart,

sometimes justified other times not.

When I get asked "what do you want to do with your life, what are your goals?" I grab a flash light, point it to my face and announce in a manic voice "take over the world and all of the chocolate making factories... mu ha ha ha haaaaa".

I appreciate with hindsight that such behaviour might not be ideal for most job interviews and its a goal that I may or may not achieve, but I do love my chocolate though, hmmm chocolate.

The other goal I have is in terms of my own Sikhi and spiritual growth and trying to progress in what little way I can.

It can be overwhelming, especially when trying to meditate for the first time.

Having talked to several people over the years the general consensus seems to be, as with most things in life, start small, practice and build on it. Despite the claims of some proud exaggerating mothers most of us didn't learn to walk straight away, it was literally a step by step process. The same applies to our own Sikhi development, regardless of what stage we perceive ourselves to be at.

Simran is sometimes overlooked in terms of a daily routine or even greeted like a mountain too tall to even attempt to climb. The Guru's gave the Sikhs Simran to help them progress spiritually, the value and power should never be underestimated. It was once explained to me that our souls are radiant and glowing before any sin or negative action has been committed.

As we progress through life any sins we commit begin to cover the soul like dirt covering a window and the only way to cleanse our souls of this dirt and these sins is through Simran and seva (selfless service).

The power of Simran is touched upon in a verse 19 from the Jap Ji Sahib:

**bharee-ai hath pair tan dayh.
paanee Dhotai utras khayh.**

Hands, feet and the body that are polluted,
With water the dirt can be washed away.

**moot paleetee kaparh ho-ay.
day saaboon la-ee-ai oh Dho-ay.**

Clothes that are soiled and stained by urine,
With soap they can be washed clean.

**bharee-ai mat paapaa kai sang.
oh Dhopai naavai kai rang.**

That can be cleansed by the Color of the Naam.
When the intellect is stained and polluted by sin,
Ang 4 Sri Guru Granth Sahib



Soul

by D Kaur



You may be asking, "What is Simran?" or "How can I do it?" It's not as difficult as you think it is, nor is it too taxing. For some reason we always over complicate things, we allow the fear of the task to suffocate our drive for doing it. Simran essentially is repeating the Lords name – repeating "Waheguru".

Go on - have a go, you can do this now vocally by just saying "Waheguru" or alternatively you could repeat it internally in your mind.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is research available to show that meditation helps in reducing heart problems, for treating dermatological conditions, hypertension or high blood pressure, Meditation can have long-term beneficial effects on the treatment of people diagnosed with anxiety disorders. Meditation can also modify the suppressive influence of strenuous physical stress on the immune system.



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I have noticed that the concept of Seva, translated as “selfless, voluntary service”, is increasingly wielded as a weapon and less as it’s intention. The other day, when a community volunteer was asked why she repeatedly failed to do what she had undertaken to do, I was gobsmacked by the response I overheard:

“I do Seva, Bhenji”, she protested. “I’m not getting paid for this. I spend so many hours here, while I could be easily doing something else. I don’t have to listen to this nonsense: if you don’t want me here, say so, and I’m gone!”

It was a clever use of the very essence of Seva.

Is this what seva is all about?

The concept of Seva, I feel, is simple and uncomplicated in Sikhi.

What good is the milk once it has been poured into a soiled vessel, the dirt of the vessel taints everything that is poured into it.

The mind, like the vessel, first needs to be cleansed if one is to prepare it for things spiritual. Otherwise, all effort goes to waste. This cleansing of the mind, the preparation, is done with the “soap” of humility.

There’s a simple, direct and effective way: Seva.

No high-flying projects are necessary for this inner cleansing. We don’t have to build monuments, light bonfires on top of mountains, or fight for world peace. Just serving the basic needs of those who are in need puts us on the right path. At home, with the neighbour, around the corner, in the community we live in, feed the hungry, clothe the destitute, shelter the homeless.

It’s for the sheer sake of Seva. It has no other goal. Even the end result is not important. You don’t need a smile or a nod, a pat on the shoulder, or the gratitude of another to confirm it. You simply do it, and you do it to the best of your ability, and nothing else matters. You don’t go home and note it in your diary, or tell your family and friends.

Or have it published in a newsletter in the “Acknowledgment” section. Also you don’t wave it in anyone’s face if you are running for election the next time around.



**The very idea of Seva begins with a metaphor: that of the milk-pot or vessel Guru Nanak Dev Ji says:
First, wash the vessel,
Next, disinfect it with incense.
Then, and only then, is it ready to receive the milk.
[Ang 725]**



Alternatively, just wash the dishes in the langar hall kitchen, serve food or look after the shoes of those who come to worship.

Anonymity helps. Not wearing a ‘t-shirt’ or ‘bandana’ that proclaims ‘SEVADAR!’ helps.

Doing it without fan-fare, without a ‘shabash’ or pat on the back, is a definite plus. Doing what others don’t want to, or cannot do, is good. Sweeping the floor, or cleaning the washrooms are therefore bound to be the most rewarding.

Also make sure there is no sign saying, “Seva provided by the Sangat of”

Nothing! Not a word, not a peep. That’s Seva.

Not too long ago, I was blessed with an opportunity to visit the Darbar Sahib in Amritsar, after an absence of more than three decades. There were so many things that added to the joy of being there.

There's always a hush around the shoe-stalls outside the main entrance, I've noticed.

The only words you hear are "Satnam, Satnam..." and "Waheguru, Waheguru..." And a lot of "ji...ji...jee-o...ji "

I don't know how they do it. But I see them taking each pair of footwear as if it is a housewarming gift. There was so much pyaar (love).

This is the essence of seva.

Here's what I've been taught and what I try to emulate, though those who know me well could easily cite many a lapse. It isn't seva if:

- it is for the purpose of getting a tax-deductible receipt.
 - your heart and soul aren't in it.
 - it isn't done with honesty and integrity.
 - you need to tell others, now or later, that you did it.
 - lack of appreciation by others, or their criticism, drives you away.
 - you believe that it is your right to do it.
 - you have to fight against others to do it.
 - you snatch it away from another, to do it.
 - you begin to believe you're the best one to do it.
- And, it isn't seva if it distresses you that others take credit for what you've done.**

Neither a Shield, seva Nor a Sword

By T. Sher Singh



Anandpur Sahib

Often referred to as the 'City of Bliss' or the 'Second City of the Sikhs'; Anandpur Sahib is located in the Rupnagar district of Punjab, India.

Previously known as Chak Nanaki before being blessed by Guru Tegh Bhadur in 1664, Anandpur Sahib hosts many festivals throughout the year. The predominant two being, Vaisakhi and Holla Mohalla; where the re-enactment of past Sikh battles takes centre stage.

With a population of fourteen thousand, this small city was turned on its head in April 1999. When no roof top, corner or pot-hole could be seen, with millions of people converging on this holy city to celebrate the 300th anniversary of birth of The Khalsa.

This city has its own rich history which is often over looked by many, either due to being located on the lower spurs of the Himalayas or just pure ignorance. Surrounded by picturesque natural scenery,



Anandpur Sahib is a must for everyone to visit.

Peak Visiting Times: Festivals of Vaisakhi (April) or Holla Mohalla (March).

Gurdwara's In & Around Anandpur Sahib

Takht Gurdwara Kesgarh Sahib

Takht Kesgarh Sahib is the birthplace of the Khalsa. This is one of only five Takhts or Seats of Authority of the Sikhs, and is the main Gurdwara in Anandpur Sahib.

Gurdwara Damdama Sahib

The tenth Guru was given the Guru Gaddi



(Guruship) here. It was at Damdama Sahib that he had declared the end of the institution of the Masands (priestly agents of the former Gurus).

Gurdwara Guru-Ka-Mahal (Bhora Sahib)

Inherited by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, from his father Guru Tegh Bhadur Ji (ninth Guru), the Sahibzadas (Guru Gobind Singh's Sons) were born here. Guru Tegh Bhadur Ji spent many years here meditating in a specially built underground room.

Gurdwara Thara Sahib

Here the ninth Guru delivered sermons to the sangat. This Gurdwara is also where the Kashmiri Brahmins came to seek protection.

Gurdwara Sis-Ganj Sahib

Here, In November 1675, the martyred head of the ninth Guru was heroically brought back by Bhai Jaita from Sis Ganj Gurdwara in Old Delhi where the rest of the Guru Ji's body was cremated.

Akal Bunga

Guru Gobind Singh Ji rested here with his family and followers.

Gurdwara Manji Sahib

The Sahibzadas received their education and military training here.

After creating the Khalsa Army, Guru Gobind Singh Ji commanded them to prepare for combat from Anandpur Sahib. Defending the honour of all was made essential to the faith. The Guru decided that the festival of Holli, with its fun, excitement and colour, would be the occasion to display and demonstrate their skills in simulated battles. The feminine Holli was left behind; hence, the emergence of the macho Holla.

It is a proud martial tradition that is celebrated on Holla Mohalla. A tradition that saw various Sikhs take on the Mughals, and slap down pesky invaders from Nadir Shah to Ahmad Shah Abdali. Hordes of Sikhs in electric blue gowns flood the ground on Holla Mohalla. Splendidly turbaned and bearded, sporting saffron sashes and motley regalia on their blue robes, the Sikhs use spears, ceremonial fans and swords while showing off their martial skills. Holla Mohalla, definitely an event not to be missed.

Holla Mohalla

Adapted from original published in Times of India



Forts of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Qila is the Punjabi word for fort; Guru Ji built these forts to protect Anandpur Sahib and its Gurdwara from the Moguls' attacking the city.

Qila Anandgarh Sahib (Fort of Steel)

Qila Anandgarh Sahib is situated in the centre of Anandpur Sahib, about 800 metres south-east of Takht Kesgarh Sahib.

Qila Holgarh Sahib (Fort of colour)

Initial celebrations of Holla Mohalla were started at this Gurdwara by Guru Gobind Singh, which was also built by the tenth Guru.

Qila Lohgarh Sahib (Fort of Steel)

Located two kilometres from Takht Kesgarh Sahib, it was the second strongest fort of the Sikhs. This fort is famously known for Bhai Bachittar Singh. He is best remembered today as the soldier who drove a spear into the head of an intoxicated elephant at the Battle of Anandpur (see pages 30 and 31)

Qila Fatehgarh Sahib (Fort of Victory)

Qila Fatehgarh Sahib was built to defend the territory of the Sahota village. When this Qila was being constructed, Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji was born hence it being named Qila Fatehgarh Sahib.

Qila Taragarh Sahib

The fort is situated 5 km from Anandpur Sahib. It was built to stop the hill armies advancing towards the city of bliss.

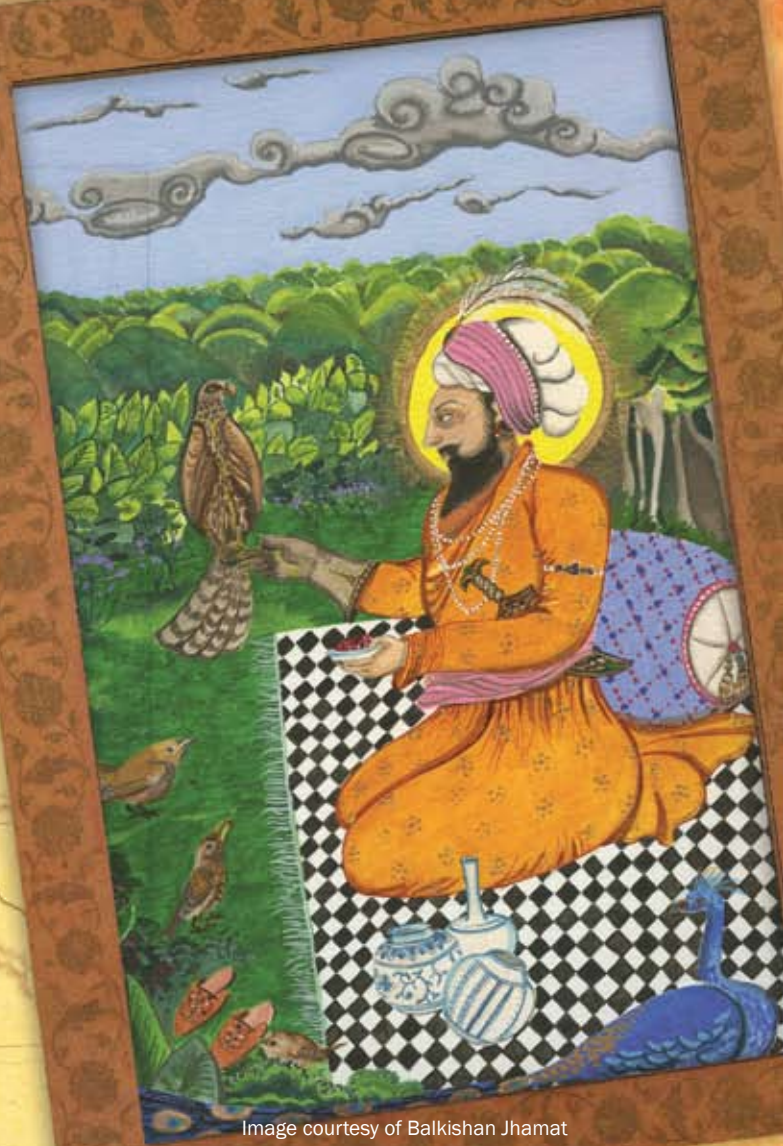
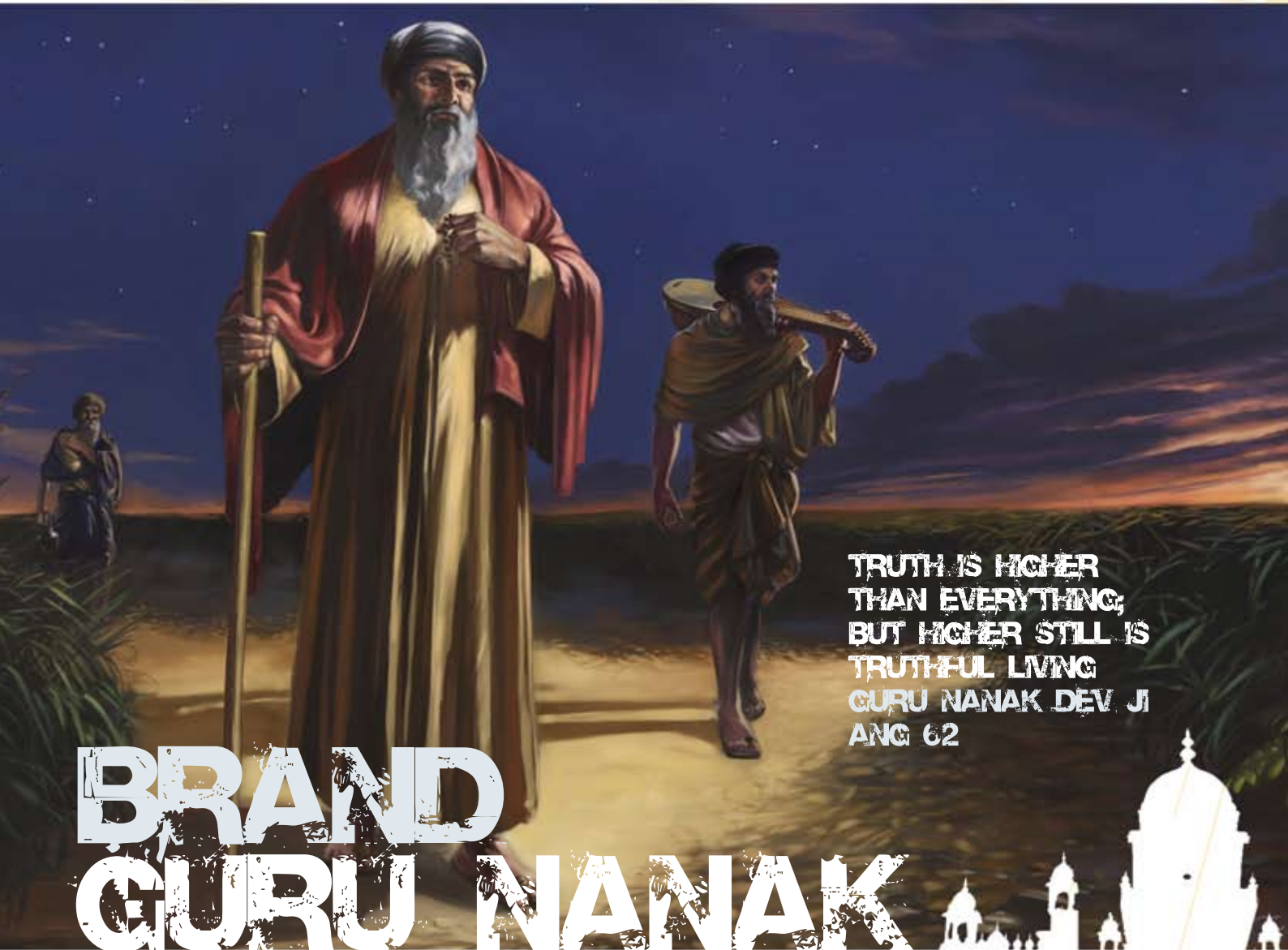


Image courtesy of Balkishan Jhamat
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City of Bliss



to the rest of the world. All religions are branded or labelled. When we think Christianity, what comes to mind is Christmas and Easter. Buddhism: and the first response would be how peaceful, non-violent its followers are. Islam, wrongly our mind automatically turns to terrorism. Hinduism, innumerable gods and goddesses, sacred cows and the caste system



TRUTH IS HIGHER
THAN EVERYTHING;
BUT HIGHER STILL IS
TRUTHFUL LIVING
GURU NANAK DEV JI
ANG 62

BRAND GURU NANAK

Nike.....Just do it....
SeeQ....Believe & Achieve...
Red Bull..it gives you wings...
Have a Break...have a Kit Kat....
All of the above are well known brands, that most of you, if not all have probably recognised, and when hearing the little slogans the brands come into your mind straight away. But what comes into our mind when we hear the words...GURU NANAK DEV JI?

What's the message, brand or label that Guru Nanak Dev Ji left for us?

Is the message so clear that it hits us like the above well known brands or is it so vague that it leaves us guessing?

Can we identify examples of Guru Nanak's message in everyday life?

For some of us the message is clear as day. Some of us are still trying to remember what the message was and some of us are probably phoning a friend right about now.

If we are struggling to remember the message, imagine what message we as Sikhs of Guru Nanak Dev Ji portray

comes to mind. Say the word "Sikhs" and perhaps the first words that come to the mind are, "Who are they? Are they a sect of Hinduism, or are they Muslims? Are they alcoholics?"

Guru Nanak Dev Ji's mission was to build a community of men and women devoted to God and filled with a sense of peace, equality and mutual respect, because God's language is compassion for all living beings. He then gave Sikhs three requirements of how to live their lives and achieve his mission of truthful living. They were: Naam Japna (meditate on God's name), Kirt Karna

(to earn an honest living) and Vaand Ke Shakna (share what you have with those around you). Three requirements so simple that anybody could achieve what Guru Nanak Dev Ji set out.

If the message is so simple, how can we not remember it?

Naam Japna: to meditate on God's name, to remember that God is always with you. Remember him by saying his name, Waheguru. By remembering him, we are always appreciating what God has done for us on a day to day basis. Meditation brings a sense of peace and tranquility within one's mind. Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, our ninth guru, showed this by meditating for twenty six years continuously.

Gurbani tells us:
Guru Ji says Naam is not only

**Simar simar simar sukh paa-i-aa.
Meditating, meditating, meditating in remembrance,
I have found peace.
Ang 202 of SGGS**

meditation, but listening to gurbani, listening to kirtan, and singing the praises of the Lord in any way possible. Guru Nanak Dev Ji meditated while he walked, he meditated while he worked and most likely even when he slept. Naam is not restricted to just meditation in the lotus position but to be done during our everyday activities.

Moving on to an honest living, also known as Kirt Karna. Immediately the story of Bhai Lalo springs to mind. How

Guru Nanak Dev Ji refused to eat a feast at Malik Bhago's mansion and instead chose the food of the poor but honest Bhai Lalo. Identifying that Bhai Lalo's food was full of milk, while Malik Bhago's was full of blood. Malik Bhago's wealth was gathered by cruelty towards the poor, which Guru Nanak resembled to sucking the blood out of them. He stated that Bhai Lalo's food on the other hand was the symbol of honesty and hardwork.

Guru Nanak himself showed us the

way to live life. He planted his crops, watered them and did everything that a normal farmer in that day would have done. The Gurus have always been practical, and practised what they preached, unlike the fake gurus we see today. Guru Ji showed us the right way of living, which includes earning by honest and truthful means and meditation on the One God.

Guru Angad Dev Ji would work hard and did the seva of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. On a daily basis, he would walk approximately five miles to fetch water for Guru Nanak Dev Ji to bathe with. He worked hard, did seva and thus earned the right to become our second Guru.

Moving on to third piece of the jigsaw: Vaand Ke Shakhna, to give or share with others what we have earned through our hard work (kirt karna). This is sharing not only what we have earned financially, but also our

time, effort and expertise. Vaand Ke Shakhna is essentially giving or sharing in selfless love and the spirit of self-sacrifice. Sharing and giving to those that need it most.

At the tender age of twelve, Guru Nanak Dev Ji was given twenty rupees by his father, Kalyaan Daas. His father wanted Guru Nanak Dev Ji to go to the market and become a trader, he asked him to strike some profitable bargains. On the way to the market Guru Nanak Dev Ji met some sadhus (Holy people) who had not eaten for many days. Feeling a sense of compassion, Guru Nanak Dev Ji instead of making his way further to the market, spent the twenty rupees on the sadhus, buying them food and clothes.

On his return home, his father wanted to see what Guru Nanak Dev Ji had invested his money in. On explaining his actions to his father, Kalyaan Daas shouted at Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Guru Nanak Dev Ji responded by saying that he had done a 'true business' by feeding the sadhus. Guru Nanak Dev Ji started off langar to feed the poor, put clothes on the backs of holy men and

defending the right of the oppressed. He shared all of his qualities to help whoever and however he could. He did charity work, he fought for the oppressed, he was a soldier, and was a holy man at the same time.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji tells us in the Jap Ji Sahib that religion is born from compassion, no person can claim to be religious if they have no compassion.

**Dhoul dharam da-i-ā kā pūt.
Santokh thāp rakhi-ā jin sūt.
Dharma is the son of
compassion; which patiently
holds the earth in its place.
Ang 3**

This highlights how important this quality is and that it is a central quality, one which religion cannot function without. So make no mistake, and make sure that as a Sikh, this virtue is always in your mind and that you analyse your feelings and actions whenever you see any injustice or suffering taking place. If your heart is not moved seeing the starving in Africa or the sufferings of the victims of terrorist bombing, then are we really doing justice to this strand of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's brand?

We now know that the brand of Guru Nanak Dev Ji is Naam Japna, Kirt Karna, and Vand Ke Shakna, three strands (similar to that of adidas). Do we apply these principles in our everyday lives, and when we do, do we think of Guru Nanak Dev Ji?

If we applied Guru Nanak Dev Ji's brand in today's society would the world be a safer, happier, and even a place liberated from war. Would we worry about our kids walking the streets? Would we see the poverty that we see in Africa or for that matter the streets of Punjab? Would we see innocent people being killed on the streets of Handsworth?

Guru Nanak Dev Ji has planted the seeds of Sikhi, now the time has come for us to water this crop and let it flourish.

Image courtesy of Art of Punjab
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Tuesday & Thursday 7pm-9pm
Wednesday 7pm-8.30pm
Thursday 7pm-9pm at Education Centre
Monday 7pm-9pm at Education Centre
7pm – 8.30pm
To be confirmed
Thursday 7pm-9pm

Music Classes

Vocal Gurbani Kirtan
Tabla Class
Sitar Class
Ladies Kirtan Classes
Ladies Dholki Classes
Ladies Satsang
Gurmat Vichaar Session (Beginners)
Gurmat Vichaar Session (Advanced)
Learn to Read Gurbani (Gurbani Santhyaa)
Sikhi Group

Sunday 2.30pm-4.30pm
Sunday 2.30pm-4.30pm
Sunday 2.30pm-4.30pm
Thursday
Wednesday
Thursday Afternoon
Friday
Sunday
Sunday 2.30pm-6pm
Tuesday 7pm-8.30pm

Education Centre Activities

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Maths Revision GCSE/AS Level
Structured teaching for foundation and higher level students
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Maths Revision AS Level

Sunday 10am-1pm
Sunday 10am-1pm
Sunday 10am-1pm
To be confirmed
Sunday 10am-1pm
Sunday 10am-1pm

Other Activities

Marriage Bureau
Registration of boys and girls
Tuesday & Thursday 7pm-8.30pm

Library
Religious Books/Videos/CD's for Hire
Sunday 11am-1pm

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Like most things in life the idea seems easy but when it comes to actions we often postpone it for another day. Have you ever found yourself saying any of the following:

1. The sink's full of dishes but I'll wash up in the morning.
2. I should change my underwear but I'll give it a few more days.
3. I need to lose weight but I'll start my diet next week.
4. I've got few things around the house to fix, I'll do it next month.
5. I want to be a good Sikh but I'll have plenty of time for that when I'm older.

If you are number 2, you may have noticed that people rarely sit next to you.

If you are number 5, have you ever really thought why you want to postpone your own Sikh development? Often people mention the following factors as reasons why they postpone their own Sikhi development to when they are drawing their pension:



Diet – I love eating steaks, kebabs, chicken korma

Drink – I have wine with my meals, I have a session every Friday

Praying – I can't concentrate

Time – I don't have the time or dedication for it

Doing it wrong – if I do it wrong I'm going to be put off for life

Hair – I love styling my hair...I could never stop cutting it

Turbans – I won't get a girl friend, they wouldn't accept me at work

No support – I don't want to ask otherwise they'll think I'm stupid

These factors and many more prevent us from even trying to do anything, they prevent us from consciously progressing on our own spiritual Sikh path and we end up doing nothing.

Whether it's just doing some Simran, tweaking elements of our own diet or going to the Gurdwara, the changes we make don't have to be drastic. I'm not Armitdhari but I do want to take steps to progress on my own Sikh spiritual path and here are just some of my thoughts.

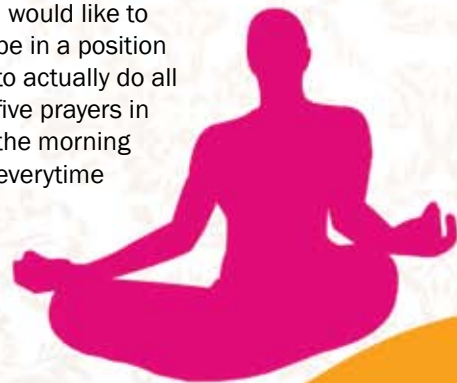
I used to think praying was only for those who had the free complimentary beard and turban and that I'd need to learn Punjabi properly first before I even attempted it. Then my one year old niece came over and her dad asked her a question to which she shook her head and used her limited vocabulary to say "no" in that way that toddlers do. Her dad then asked her to say Waheguru and she put her tiny hands together, tilted her head to the side and said

proudly
"Waheguru". Seeing this, her four year old brother came and asked me to observe as he started reciting the Mool Mantra. **At that point I realised that if a one year old and four year old can do just simple Simran so easily, what was stopping me?** What was I actually afraid of? As a result of this I've tried to do some sort of Simran every day.

I'd wake up and repeat ten "Waheguru's" first thing or repeat ten Mool Mantras in the morning. I've set a reminder in my phone's calendar for twice a day, morning and afternoon, with the message 'Do 10 Mool Mantra'. Sometimes I don't have the time to do all ten but because of this reminder I'm doing more than I used to which previously was none.

Indian

I would like to be in a position to actually do all five prayers in the morning everytime




but time isn't always on my side and sometimes I'm not organised enough to do it before I leave the house. The five prayers in the morning are collectively known as Nitnem and are composed of Jap Ji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Tav Prasad Swaiye, Chaupai Sahib, Anand Sahib and in the evening Rehras Sahib and Kirtan Sohila.

I've put the Nitnem on my iPhone as mp3's so now when I'm on the train to work I listen to my Nitnem. I recently discovered the Sikh iPhone Apps - Gurbani Anywhere, iNitnem, iSikhi which let me read my paath on my iPhone. I can't confidently read Gurmukhi but luckily it has the phonetic soundings for the paath in English for each Gurmukhi line and also has the translations which help me understand what I'm reading. I'm trying to learn Gurmukhi and found an App called Gurbani World which plays the paath and also shows a video of the Gurmukhi, English and phonetic pronunciation too.

timing

All of these Apps are allowing me to learn my paath, pronounce it with some confidence and have helped me progress spiritually. Before that night my cute niece and nephew turned up, I don't think I would ever be in a position to take the steps I have taken and to go from doing nothing.





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ਕੀ ਪਿਛਲੇ 28 ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਯੂਕੇ ਵੀਜ਼ਾ ਤੋਂ ਨਾਂਹ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ?



ਹੁਣ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਬੜੇ ਵਾਜਬ ਰੇਟ 'ਤੇ
ਰਿਫਿਊਜ਼ ਹੋਏ ਕੇਸ ਬਾਰੇ
ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ।



ਯੂਕੇ ਇਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਮਾਹਿਰ
ਹਰਜਾਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੰਗਲ

ਐੱਲ.ਐੱਲ.ਬੀ. (ਆਨਰਜ਼)



ਹਰਜਾਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੰਗਲ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਹਾਈ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਰ
ਸਰ ਮਾਈਕਲ ਆਰਬਰ ਤੋਂ ਗੋਲਡ ਮੈਡਲ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ

- ▶ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੈਟਲਮੈਂਟ ਅਤੇ ਫੈਮਿਲੀ ਵਿਜ਼ਿਟਰ ਅਪੀਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਹਿਰ ਹਾਂ।
- ▶ ਇਸ ਲਈ, ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਵੀਜ਼ਾ ਤੋਂ ਮਨਾਹੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਹੁਣ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜਾਂ ਯੂਕੇ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਅਪੀਲ ਸੈਂਟਰਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੱਕ ਅਪੀਲ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਪੀਲ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਅਪੀਲਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ 95 ਫੀਸਦੀ ਕਾਮਯਾਬੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਹੈ।
- ▶ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪੁਆਇੰਟ ਬੇਸਡ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਦੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ।
- ▶ ਯੂਕੇ ਤੋਂ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਕਲੀਅਰੈਂਸ ਸਰਟੀਫਿਕੇਟ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ।
- ▶ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਯੂਕੇ 'ਚ ਐੱਮਏ ਟੀਵੀ ਸਕਾਈ ਚੈਨਲ 793 'ਤੇ ਹਰ ਸ਼ੁਕਰਵਾਰ ਸ਼ਾਮ 7.30 ਵਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਵਾਲ ਪੁੱਛ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ।



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“Sokhi nai milgi ...tenu aehe pagri sardara” (you haven’t been given this turban so easily, sardara)

The chorus of Sukhshinder Shinda’s new album triggers a million thoughts in our minds. Intrigued by the lyrics, I set about to watch the video. It brought a rare smile to my face... a video with a difference – no sleaze! Being so distinct, the team at SEEQ met Mr Shinda, to see the inspiration behind his album, *Satgur Mera* (My True Lord). From a young age, Shinda was constantly immersed in music, with his older brother Mohan Singh a singer and his father having love for dhadhi and kavishiri. Evenings spent as a youngster at Bebe Nanaki Gurdwara in Handsworth laid the foundations of the love and respect for his faith.

“My brother used to bring kirtani jathas and katha vacharaks (preachers) back to our house, and felt it was an honour to offer them good hospitality”, he tells me. “This taught me to always respect not only my parents, but my elders.” An outlook we should all hold. “Going to the Gurdwara made me who I am today”, Shinda states proudly. Ajit Singh Matlashi has moulded Shinda to the artist he is today, as for the last 12 years he has been teaching Shinda the classical form of kirtan (Raag).

He dedicates his religious album to the influence and blessing he has received from Guru Granth Sahib Ji. As we discuss the song which brought my attention to Shinda in the first place, ‘Aehe Pagri Sardara’; he tells me; **“The turban itself symbolises respect, so why don’t we show it the respect it deserves. I tie a turban...it makes me who I am. The turban is held in such high esteem people would attempt to put their turban at the feet of another individual as a sign of giving them their honour, their life, their everything! So why shouldn’t we sing about and keep the turban...it makes me feel so privileged to even tie a turban”.**



Passionately he declares, “The Gurus have sacrificed everything they had for us, for the Pagri. They sacrificed so much and yet people don’t even know.

As a minimum sign of appreciation and respect...the least I can do is tie a turban.”

The song itself reflects on how Sikhs are now replacing their turbans for caps simply for comfort, ease, fashion or to mix into society. The pagri illuminates the many courageous Sikhs who sacrificed their lives but

not their religion.

In particular it refers to Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Mati Daas and it emotionally evokes the sacrifice of Guru Gobind Singh Ji’s entire family and how he expressed complete contentment in the will of God.

It tells us of the Sikh regiments who fought valiantly in both World Wars, sacrificing their lives but not the honour of their dastar, of how Sikhs overcame the turban bans imposed on them by the Mughals (as it is in France today).

A fitting end to the song is where a non-Sikh apologising to a young Sikh for suggesting a cap could replace his dastar, announces:

“I’M SORRY I DIDN’T KNOW THE VALUE OF YOUR TURBAN”

Something that we are all guilty of.

I asked Shinda if he had a message for the thousands of fans reading this article. He replied:

“We need everyone to know about the sacrifices made for us to be here today and practice our faith... then maybe the youth will keep it real and stay in touch with their religion and culture...be proud of who they are and not forget where they have come from”.



**MY TURBAN
SUKHSHINDER
SHINDA**

Running Man

100 years young Fauja Singh is the world's oldest marathon runner, sweating it out at most competitions in the United Kingdom and around the world.

He holds 12 Commonwealth, European and British records for his age-group. He also ran as one of the torch-bearers for the Athens Olympics in 2004 and was chosen, in 2005, as the Official Starter of the Edinburgh marathon, the second biggest marathon in the UK.

Fauja has broken bread at the Buckingham Palace with the Queen, who awarded him the runner-up award of Living Legend at Windsor Castle in 2006. More recently, Fauja was part of the Queen's Baton Relay, when it was flagged off in London as the run-up to the Commonwealth Games 2010 to be held in Delhi later this year

Sikh Hero

Sukhwinder Singh, hailed a 'hero' by all in Britain, had been killed chasing two muggers in London, England. On January 8 2010 evening, Sukhwinder chased and confronted two youths in East London when they mugged a young woman. One of them stabbed Sukhwinder, who died at London's Royal Hospital. He was immediately termed a 'hero' and the UK's top police officer; Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Paul Stephenson said that it was heroes like Sukhwinder that "made our society worthwhile."

Sikh soldiers to guard the Queen

Queen Elizabeth II has switched bearskin hats for turbans outside Buckingham Palace, where Sikh soldiers have begun guarding the monarch and her treasures.

Signaller Simranjit Singh and Lance Cpl. Sarvjit Singh are the first Sikhs to take part in patrols outside the queen's residence and to stand watch over the Crown jewels at the Tower of London across town.

First Sikh in decades graduates US Army officer school

The soldiers in standard-issue fatigues and combat boots stood side-by-side repeating their creed: "I am an American soldier. I am a warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army values"



“Sikhs in the Media”

Knight defends the right of Sikhs

Sir Mota Singh publicly defended the right of Sikhs to wear a five inch Kirpan in public amid a growing revolt against a perceived clampdown on religious freedom in schools.

After his appointment to the bench in 1982, Britain's first Asian judge attracted attention by wearing a white turban instead of a wig in court. The Sardar, 79, was knighted for "services to the administration of justice, community relations and to the voluntary sector".

Capt. Tejdeep

Singh Rattan was no different except that he wore a full beard and black turban, the first Sikh in a generation allowed to complete U.S. Army officer training without sacrificing the articles of his faith.

Sikh status on Census 2011

The UK Sikhs are requesting the Office for National Statistics to add a box for Sikhs to tick in the ethnicity section of the form for the 2011 census. Sikhs argue that if they are not represented in this section then they will effectively remain invisible to the authorities. An underestimation of Sikhs in the population would lead to fewer community resources and services.

ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਨਿਹਰੀ ਮੌਕਾ

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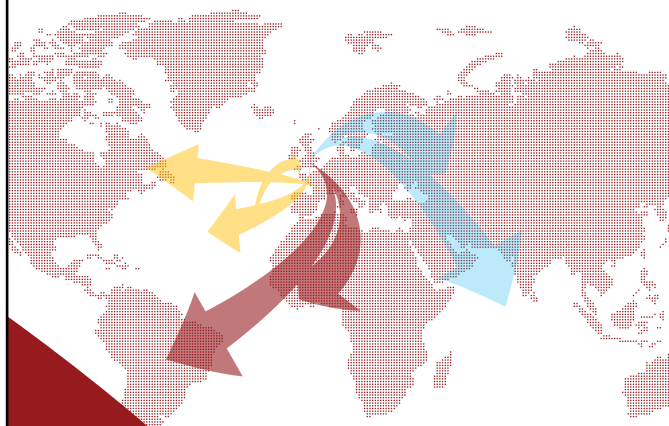


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Refreshing Change

Yo Baksho, how come some times when I go to the Gurdwara I get propaaaaa! Parshaaad and sometimes they give me lechiia and almonds? What's that about? The thing is my kids don't really like the fake purchaaad.

Sometimes the 'fake parshaad' as you refer to is given in such circumstances when the real stuff is finished or just not been made on that particular day. But I would like to point out that in India lechiia are used as a mouth refreshner, so depending on how close you were when you asked the giani, it could be a subtle hint. On a side note, sometimes the 'real stuff' needs to be eaten proportionally; your Uncle Mangi is now struggling to get into his size 38's.

Full Circle

Dear Baksho, how come some dudes when they go to the Gurdwara, they walk a full circle around the Guru and some don't? Is there an official way I should do it?

Doing a 'parkarma' is what it's called, when an individual walks around Guru Granth Sahib Ji in a clockwise direction. It signifies that the guru is the central core of our lives and all decisions that we make, are made considering Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It is a pledge to Guru Ji, that where ever we go, whatever we do, everywhere, in all the directions, I stay close to Guru Ji and get all the spiritual guidance from Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Sikhs that do this, do it as an extra when they matha teek. There is no official way of matha teeking, so do as your heart finds comfortable.

I Choo-Choo-Choose You

Dear Baksho, everyone in India seems to have adopted these "spiritual" Babai. How do I know what Baba to choose, there's so many to choose from, I've heard the there's even a Baba with lights?

Choose which ever one you find most comfortable. Big ones, small ones, tall ones and even ones with lights. There's a Baba out there for everyone, so don't miss out. On a serious note, refer to the article on page 4.

Early Riser

Dear Baksho, how many prayers is one meant to read in the morning and why are we meant to get up so early in the morning, is it because of time zones and that is when God is awake?

Dear Baksho

A Sikh must do a minimum of five prayers in the morning. They are: Jap Ji Sahib, Jaap Sahib, Tav Parsad Swayaei, Chaupai Sahib and Anand Sahib. We are meant to get up before dawn, as this is referred in gurbani as the ambrosial hours of the day. This is the only real time in the day we have to concentrate on god and not the stresses of the world. God is awake at all times, even in the middle of the afternoon when you are dragging yourself out of bed at two in the afternoon.

Cheque Please

Dear Baksho, how come when the men are doing Kirtan on stage I have to give them £1? Sometimes I don't have the correct change, but wasn't sure if they accepted card.

Most Kirtani's probably accept cash, card and cheque. The odd few might even have a PayPal account. I think it's more to do with it being a nice round figure rather than have any religious significance, and a pound is a nice show of appreciation.

You've Got Mail

Dear Baksho, my other half (I don't want to give his name, so for arguments sake we'll refer to him as Itchy) recently has been working late a lot, and I get lonely. Is there any Prayers I can do?

Firstly with modern technology there's no reason for 'Itchy' not to be in regular contact. But you can repeat many prayers as you like. Sukhmani Sahib is the prayer that brings one inner peace. Chaupai Sahib: the prayer that asks for protection. You could even meditate on the word Waheguru or repeat the Mool mantar. I think you're spoilt for choice.

Let's Knot

Dear Baksho, I'm a lazy kind of Guy and sometimes can't be bothered to tie a knot in my Kachera can I not put an elastic in it?

No! Unless you're a young kid there's no reason to wear an elasticated Kachera. The knot acts as a reminder not to commit adultery or any other sin.

Dressed For Success

Dear Baksho, I've seen some men wear suits and dresses to the Gurdwara. Are they confused about their sexuality?

I share your concerns. Your uncle Mangi loves to wear a dress on Saturday nights and claims it to be religious too, even though his are normally purchased from Primark. I think the ones you are referring to, are actually religious outfits. Guru Gobind Ji has stated it is important for a Sikh to have not only Bani (an internal spiritual entity), but also Bana (an external appearance of a tradition Sikh uniform). So in terms of dress I think I can confidently say they are not confused.

Michelin Star

Dear Baksho, I ate langar last week at the Gurdwara and the kheer was burnt. Who should I complain to – the women in the kitchen or the president of the Gurdwara?

Burnt kheer is one of my pet hates as I have a sweet tooth and never say no to kheer. Saying that, this is not Perfect Pizza, where you can put a hair on your pizza and get your money back (not that I have tried that children). Langar is a gift of the Guru and should always been appreciated.

Fight Club

Dear Bakso, do you have a list of when the Gurdwaras change their committees because I was at a Gurdwara when it happened a couple of years ago and there were bare kickoffs! If so can you let me know when these dates are and can you get me front row tickets?

Im sorry to hear that there were 'bare kick offs' when you went to the Gurdwara. To answer your question, committees are normally changed on average every two years but it shouldn't be like fight club when this happens! If you want to see some front row action I suggest you go and see some UFC, there are some great Sikh fighters nowadays such as Subaigh Singh from Nottingham, or even better get involved yourself. (UFC not Gurdwara fight clubs that is).

Favourable Exchange Rate

Baksho, I went to the gurdwara the other day and when I was giving the raggi a pound the man in front of me put a Scottish note down and picked £4 up! Is that allowed?

No, the individual in question has committed a crime and in future you should report such behaviour.

Hair Style

Dear Baksho, I am a white indigenous family man who lives next to a lovely Sikh family. Why does my Sikh neighbour tie a cloth under his chin, knotted at the top, does he have a toothache?

I very much doubt he has a toothache, but it's probably worth asking him. Instead he is styling his beard, most probably in readiness for going to work, something similar to when women style their hair, and use accessories to do so.

Nice View

YO BK, Last time I went to the gurdwara I ripped my jeans when I bent down to do matha teek and it was well embarrassing! Can I matha teek standing up?

No, I suggest you go to the gym and enrol on a bums n tums class or buy bigger jeans tubby..

Shame Shame I Know Your Name

Dear Baksho, My teacher can't pronounce my name; "Rompadompajit Singh" and called me 'umpa lumpaa'. How can I get my name changed?

Lol. I'm sorry; but I'm going have to refer to you as Rompa, as it is a bit of a mouthful. I think you might have to take this up with your parents firstly. This name has been given to you out of love. If your parents have followed the Sikh code of conduct, the first letter of your name has probably been taken from Guru Granth Sahib Ji, hence you name begins with the letter 'R'. Once your parents choose your name it is normal procedure is that it is passed and agreed within the sangat. So generally your name cannot be changed. I hope this helps Umpa.

Hairy Canary

Dear Baksho, I have an embarrassing problem in that im very hairy! I have hair on my hands up to my fingernails and all down my back. My friends even call me Wolverine and Ewok. Is it ok for me to have all over laser hair removal or threading?

No, Sikh's believe that hair is a gift from God, just as any part of the body is. They also believe that whilst meditating on the Lord's name the hairs vibrate, so removing these hairs in any form is forbidden.

One For All

Dear Baksho, On Sunday when I went to the Gurdwara and when I went upstairs to matha teek and there was five Guru Granth sahibs and I only had one 20p piece! Which one do I matha teek to?

Do You know your ini mini myni mo! On a serious note you can matha teek to anyone of the Guru Granth Sahibs as they are all the Shabad Guru.

Email your questions to
baksho@see-q.net



In the year 1699 there was a harvest of a different kind, a type of harvest that would change this world forever. History tells us that in 1699 at Fort Kesgharh Sahib, Guru Gobind Singh Ji came out to an assembly of onlookers in their thousands and unleashed his sword.

He asked for a volunteer, who would give their head and die for their faith. On the third time of asking, Daya Ram stepped forward. He was then beheaded on stage in front of, what were now confused onlookers. Thousands quickly fled, thinking the Guru had gone insane, he asked again: "I need another volunteer".

Without hesitation Dharam Daas came forward. Dharam Daas was treated no differently to Daya Raam, and before those who had little faith in Guru Gobind Singh Ji could plan their getaway, the body of Dharam Daas fell to the ground.

Several minutes later, there was five severed bodies all lying on the stage. Guru Gobind Singh Ji then performed what many would class as a miracle.

ORANGE ORDER

Vaisakhi; the birth of the Khalsa falls in the second month of the Sikh calendar, Vaisakh. In Punjab, the month of Vaisakh triggers many celebrations; as the community reaps the benefits of a year long tough grind in their fields. Their work is over, crops have been harvested and everyone has money in their pocket.

He surgically re-attached the heads onto different bodies and re-dressed them with the Five Kakkar (Five-K's). After mixing water and sugar crystals in an iron bowl, whilst repeating the five prayers of the Nitnem, he created Amrit. The Amrit was then poured into the mouths of these five; one by one they all sat up and chanted WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH! These five had now been blessed and the Khalsa had been created.

The title Panj Pyare (Five beloved ones) was given to these five: Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Himmat Singh, Bhai Mokham Singh and Bhai Sahib Singh.

The Guru immediately then asked to be initiated into the Khalsa. He was then blessed, and given the name 'Singh'. Having previously been known as Gobind Rai, from that day forth he was known as Guru Gobind Singh.

To this day, around the world, Sikhs commemorate this auspicious occasion and continue to be recognised for the distinctive attire of the Five K's. These Five K's act as the discipline and uniform of all members of the Sikh faith, regardless of gender, background or status. The Kanga (comb), Kesh (uncut hair), Kacheera (long shorts), Kara (bangle) and Kirpan (sword) provide an ever contemporary message to society that we are all equal in the eyes of God and it is our actions that will be observed; not our standing, social class or physical make up...

Bringing Communities Together:

Ranjit Singh Dhanda chairman of CSGB said "If you want to see diversity at work; come to the Vaisakhi '10, the largest event of its kind in Europe. All the diverse communities in Birmingham join to celebrate the Sikh festival of Vaisakhi, thus promoting social cohesion, awareness, respect of other faiths as enshrined in Sikh ethos.

CSGB 2010



The Council of Sikh Gurdwaras in Birmingham & Sandwell, Sadh Sangat & Panthic Organisations.
We invite all communities to the:

Vaisakhi Open Air Celebrations & Nagar Kirtans

Sunday 25th April 2010

Vaisakhi '10

Nagar Kirtan Sandwell

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Gurdwara Shaheed
Baba Deep Singh



Handsworth Park

Gurdwara Bebe
Nanaki Ji

Nagar Kirtan Birmingham

start 9.30am

Guru Ramgarhia
Sikh Temple, Hockley

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Radio 7
17th April - 27th April 2010



The Brummie Vaisakhi: The Council of Sikh Gurdwaras in Birmingham mark this religious occasion every year, holding the largest Vaisakhi Open Air Celebration outside India by attracting over 80,000 people from all faiths, who join in to celebrate the gift of life and peaceful co-existence. Everyone is welcome to attend this free event which includes cultural and religious activities, arts, crafts, exhibitions, stalls, live sports and family entertainment. The event helps promote social cohesion, awareness and respect of other faiths as enshrined in the Sikh code of conduct.



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A Sikh is a Sant Sipahi; a Saint Soldier. This means that he/she aspires to have saintly qualities, such as being loving, humble, patient, honest, fair and kind. Likewise, a Sikh has a warrior's spirit; being courageous, standing for truth and justice, and protecting others from harm.

These virtues/ qualities of Sikhs have meant that through a relatively small time span Sikhs have had many atrocities committed on them and have fought many battles and wars. From fighting state sponsored terror and oppression by the

Moghul rulers; who tried to forcefully convert the subcontinent of India to Islam to fighting in World War 1 & 2.



Guru Gobind Singh Ji drilled the warrior spirit into all his soldiers, regardless of their size, shape or color. Standing at a menacing four foot eight inches tall, Bhai Bachittar Singh was given the difficult task of fighting a drunken elephant under the command of the Moghuls'. With the blessing of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Bhai Bachittar Singh showed that **it isn't about the size of the warrior in the fight, but the size of the fight within the warrior.** A single strike to the elephants head was enough to defeat the elephant and force the enemy to retreat.

During the tyrannical Mogul era there was a fierce fight between the Sikhs and Moghuls and it is estimated that 70% of the Sikh community were slaughtered in one single day. This black day is also known as holocaust day in Sikh history.

The Sikhs offered resistance to Ahmed Shah Abdali in the manner that evoked praise even in the hearts of their detractors. Nur Muhammad in spite of his sympathy for his comrades-in-faith and hatred for the Sikhs could not help describing their excellent conduct, their experience in battlefield, their liberality and their valour, intrepidity, agility and grand physical appearance.

Saint Soldier is often a term that is associated to the ideals of what a good Sikh should be. The Sikh psyche is based on some very simple concepts that are universally applicable and appealing.

CALL OF DUTY

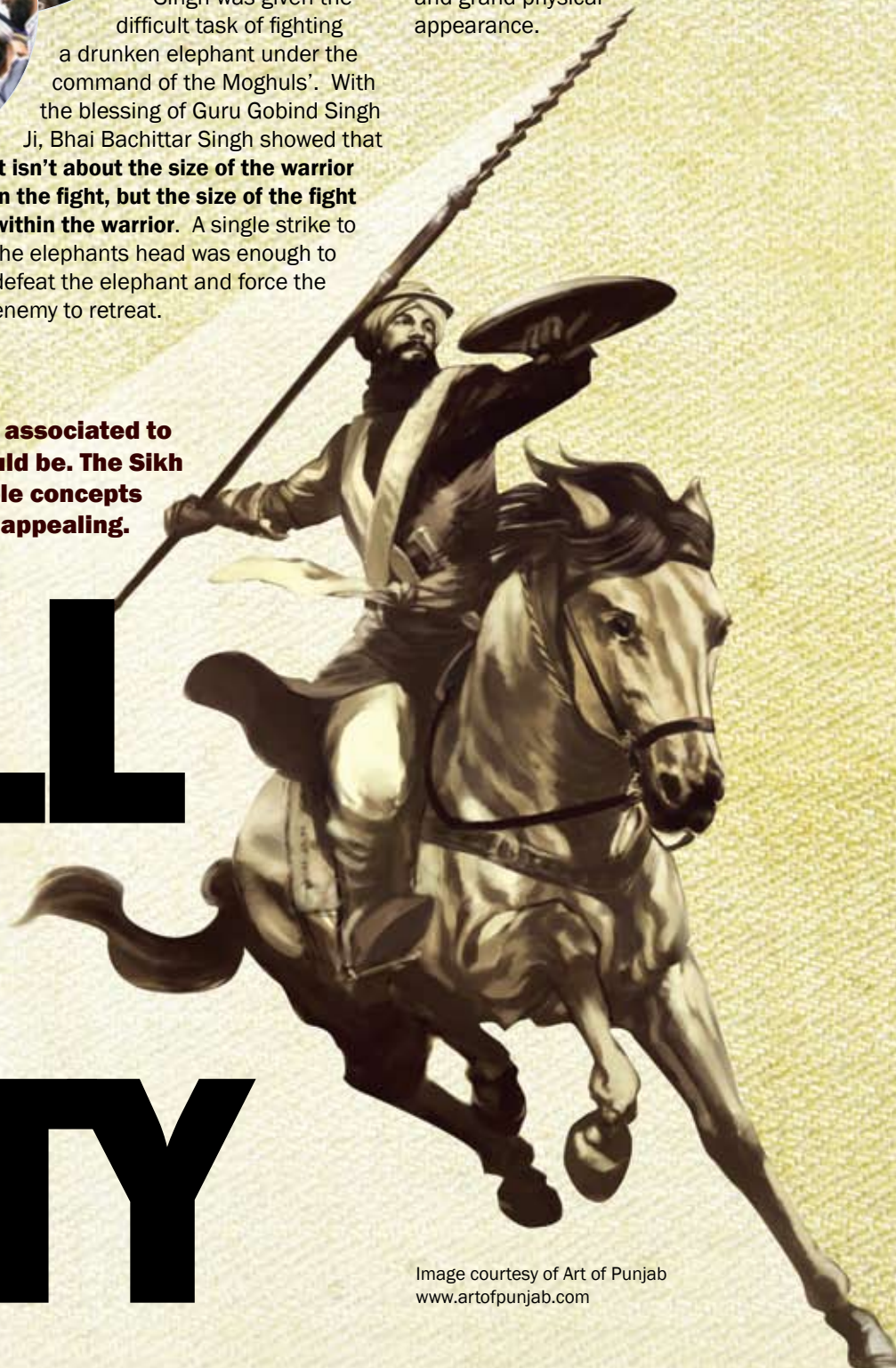


Image courtesy of Art of Punjab
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"Do not call the dogs (the Sikhs) dogs, because they are lions (and are courageous like lions in the battlefield. How can a hero, who roars like a lion be called a dog? (Moreover) like lions they spread terror in the field of battle..."

Besides their fighting, listen to one more thing in which they excel above all other warriors. They never kill a coward who is running away from the battlefield. They do not rob a woman of her wealth or ornaments whether she is rich or a servant.

Sikhs regrouped and got ready to fight the tyrants. Ultimately they became strong enough to defeat the tyrants and started ruling the area around 1760s. Under the Rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh which spanned approximately 40 years and where Punjab stretched from Pakistan & Afghanistan and also between Northern India and China.

During this period British rule over Punjab was abtinent and only after Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death, could their desire to subject India to colonial rule be achieved.

The Sikhs also fought many battles with the British, and eventually were defeated after much treachery. After many years of being the enemy of the British, the Sikhs were revered as a martial race that were very courageous and brave and were without fear of death.

"I have seen only two races in the world who really like fighting, the Sikhs and the Gurkhas. In peacetime the Sikhs are difficult men to command : but put them in a hot corner, and they live up to their title of Singh, which means lion. In Mesopotamia in the last war the Arabs called them Black Lions."

They are remarkable people, the Sikhs with their Ten Prophets, five distinguishing marks, and their baptismal rite of water stirred with steel; people who have made history, and will make it again".

**Martial India,
F. Yeats-Brown, 1945**

COURAGE UNDER FIRE

During World War II the 1st Sikh battalion took part in fierce fighting against the Japanese in a war zone on the Indo-Burma border. On March 11, 1943 the battalion was the advance party along the Maungdaw-Buthidaung Road. The Japanese were fortifying a hill summit and putting up stiff resistance. The only way to approach the hill was by means of a narrow track. On this track leading the attack was the section commanded by Naik Nand Singh.



When the detachment reached the crest it came under heavy machinegun fire and every man in the section was killed or wounded. Naik Nand Singh dashed forward alone, he was wounded by a grenade as he neared the first Japanese trench. He took out his bayonet and killed the two occupants.

Under heavy fire Nand Singh jumped up and charged the second trench, he was again wounded by a grenade and knocked down, but he got up and hurled himself into the trench again, killing two Japanese soldiers with his bayonet. He then moved onto the third trench and captured it single-handed.

With the capture of the third trench the enemy fire started to die away and the rest of the platoon charged the other Japanese positions, killing thirty seven out of the forty Japanese holding it. Naik Nand Singh wounded six times in the assault, literally carried the position single-handed. For his valour in the call of duty the award of Victoria Cross was bestowed upon him.

The Sikh Regiment is one of the highest decorated regiments of the Indian Army. The history of the Regiment spans 154 years with heroic deeds of gallantry and courage which have few parallels, if any.



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